

BUILDING VOCABULARY AS A MEANS OF SUPPORTING K-2 ELEMENTARY  
ESL BEGINNERS TO REACH ACADEMIC GOALS

Presented to  
The Graduate Program  
of  
Greensboro College

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in  
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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December 2021

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## **Abstract**

Every year, schools around the United States receive a considerable number of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse CLD students who are enrolling for the first time and are English learners. It is highly probable that English beginner learners in the K-2 grade levels are having their first ever schooling experience and are also new at learning the language and culture. These considerations are important to keep in mind when teaching K-2 elementary English as a Second Language (ESL) beginners. When helping ESL beginner students it is important to help them build a significant vocabulary. This will help these learners to feel more confident and find their voice in their classrooms while also improving their oral, reading, and writing skills. This paper contains a series of lesson planning ideas to ease vocabulary acquisition for this student group, considering the three tiers: basic vocabulary, high-frequency words, and content-based vocabulary.

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my sweet daughter Sara, the main reason for my project. At age of 4, she arrived in the United States without any knowledge of the English language, and she has shown me that an ESL learner can go beyond academic expectations. I would like to thank my lovely husband who recorded all the softball games I missed and for being supportive all the time. Finally, but not any less important, I thank my mom who took a flight from Colombia to be with me during this process.

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Elena King, for her guidance and support throughout the composition of my project. Also, I would like to thank our librarian Rebecca Quigley for her assistance in finding the best resources for my thesis. Moreover, I am grateful for Dr. Michelle Plaisance and her wise administration to keep the program's high expectations; and for all the professors who were part of this meaningful learning process.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Vocabulary is an important aspect when teaching and learning a second language. It is not a secret that many second language learners might not feel comfortable in some specific situations when communicating in a second language. They might be able to manage their day-to-day vocabulary used in basic communications at home or school but feel little prepared to speak up their thoughts. Hesitating and then having an “I cannot find that word in my mind” feeling, results in communication struggles and inhibition. Many times, students arrive in the United States as young children or teenagers without knowing a single word in English. The transition of jumping from one culture to another and from one language to another may cause an increase in the affective filter (Krashen, 1982).

Vocabulary plays a critical role when reading or speaking in a second language, and according to research, is a heavy charge for English learners’ reading comprehension (Peregoy & Boyle, 2017). Also, Li (2012) states “Expanding student’s vocabulary is essential for the development of other language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening” (p. 9). In response, teachers sometimes create lists of spelling words to send home weekly with students as a strategy to increase academic language and then, assess such lists at the end of the week.

Bearing the last paragraph in mind, Fisher, Fray, and Hattie (2016) assert that “children and adolescents experience vocabulary instruction as making passing acquaintances with a wide range of words. They know that many of the words won’t be used again, and that next week there will be a new list” (p.49). Moreover, teachers are overloading students’ working memory

with long word lists that will not get into their long-term memory activated. The more information that is delivered at once, the more likely that the students will not actually learn (Willingham, 2010).

After seven years of teaching foreign languages (English and Spanish), I have seen how my students' formal and formative assessments show vocabulary as the weakest area. Assuredly as a teacher, I recognize that teachers put forth lots of effort to fill vocabulary gaps while applying different and innovative activities researched on the internet or using our prescribed core materials. Nevertheless, English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' needs are different from native English speakers and those differentiated needs should be considered when planning our lessons. Teaching vocabulary to an ESL learner should be carefully planned, chosen, and contextualized, but it should not happen by accident. Furthermore, teachers should select the vocabulary needed for the students to understand the lesson (Quiocho & Ulanoff, 2009), and they should be exposed to a variety of word context situations (Li, 2012), repetitions, and purposeful reasons to use it (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie. 2016).

Teaching vocabulary in isolation as a different subject or unit is not only a waste of time but also purposeless. As I have mentioned before, all skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are connected. Oral and written language work together in day-to-day living. Peregoy and Boyle (2017) call this *Functional Integration*, which means that in a regular interaction with our environment, people are meant to use a combination of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary eases reading and listening comprehension; if these two areas improve, it means that the student is able to understand more words orally and then, their writing will look more proficient. Peregoy and Boyle (2017) explain, "In primary grades, for example, the teacher may read a picture book aloud, taking time along the way to let children orally predict what will

happen next...” on the other hand, “Older students may perform a play from a written script, engaging in lengthy discussion over the fine points of interpretation, with the final result being a dramatic oral performance of the play” (p.162). Effective teachers take advantage of every learning opportunity to promote successful integration of the skills.

My project is a website that provides English Language Arts (ELA) teachers as well as ESL teachers with vocabulary lesson ideas addressed to beginner English as a second language learners. The main intent of my website is to guide teachers on research verified strategies to enhance their ESL students’ vocabulary with examples of how put the strategies into practice. This benefits teacher’s practices and increases second language learners’ confidence. Academically, applying such strategies might assist to close the vocabulary gap while students show a growth of their reading and speaking comprehension skills.

This project supports the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) community, which I belong to, and represents my growth as an ESL teacher by improving my teaching practices. As part of a CLD family, I understand how frustrating it is for a Second Language (L2) student to understand and keep track of what it is expected from them to do in class. Old-school learners, like me, were taught vocabulary through an extensive list of words to look for in the dictionary. As a teacher, and before my Master’s in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), I was not truly aware of the number of student-friendly activities and ideas available for teaching vocabulary. It is my hope to keep this online resource as a collaborative experience in which teachers might share experiences, doubts, resources for all English levels, and plan online conferences.



## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Words are more complex than they first may seem. Nation (2020) states that learning a word implies learning word pronunciation, spelling, denotation, and special connotations; therefore, an English learner should be aware. In addition, English vocabulary conveys single lexical items, lexical phrases, and multiword expressions (Coxhead, 2013) showcasing multiple meanings for the same word.

This chapter reviews the importance for an English Language Learner (ELL) to learn depth and breadth of vocabulary and how this knowledge improves other skills such as speaking and reading. Also, it touches on types of vocabulary with emphasis on the required one for beginner students who are the subject of this research. Finally, it discusses the most used vocabulary teaching strategies and activities for teachers to apply in their classroom practices.

### **Vocabulary and English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners**

An ESL learner's first need is to interact with their immediate English language environment, which is often the school. The fact of knowing a great quantity of vocabulary and knowing how to use it is fundamental for a L2 learner to expand their comprehension of written text and feel socially empowered by communicating with others inside and/or outside the classroom (Vásquez, Hansen, & Philip C. Smith, 2013). Chacón-Beltrán et al (2010) highlights that "vocabulary knowledge and use play an important role in successful communication and that it is one of the domains where non-native speakers can equal native speakers and, on some

occasions, surpass them” (p. 2). Vocabulary might be recognized as the core of the language. It eases the students’ oral and written skills. Having a great vocabulary size establishes the ability of the speaker to be actively involved in everyday speaking (Adolphs & Schmitt, 2003), an issue that has been recently considered as a key for a successful oral communication (Akbarian, 2018). Additionally, vocabulary enhances the ESL student’s reading comprehension and writing skills. A lack of vocabulary will result in poor writing composition or will be a hindrance to understanding a text (Alahmadi & Foltz, 2020).

Vocabulary could be measured by the number of words a learner knows and how well students know them, or breadth and depth respectively (Schmitt, 2010). With the last words being understood, breadth and depth complement each other. Knowing a great number of words and recognizing lexical structure increases the changes of the ESL learner’s ability to anticipate or “get” the meaning of a word by its context (Qian, 2002) which might improve their oral and written comprehension. Coxhead (2013) asserts:

Because vocabulary knowledge is personal, individuals possess various degrees of knowledge of specific lexical items. Typically, however, learners have greater receptive vocabulary knowledge and more breadth than depth knowledge of individual words or phrases. Students tend to develop more productive vocabulary knowledge based on their receptive knowledge of words or phrases. (p. 17).

Additionally, she specifies that perceptive and receptive knowledge are contained in three aspects: Form, Meaning and Use. Nation (2020) expands these aspects are expanded in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 What is Involved in Knowing a Word

<b>Component</b>	<b>Receptive Knowledge</b>	<b>Productive knowledge</b>
Spoken	What does the word sound like? (F)	How is the word pronounced? (F)
Written	What does the word look like? (F)	How is the word written and spelled? (F)
Word Parts	What parts are recognizable in this word? (F)	What word parts are needed to express the meaning? (F)
Form and meaning	What meaning does this word form signal? (M)	What word form can be used to express this meaning? (M)
Concepts and referents	What is included in the concept? (M)	What items can the concept refer to? (M)
Associations	What other words does this make us think of? (M)	What other words could be used instead of this one? (M)
Grammatical functions	In what patterns does the word occur? (U)	In what patterns must this word be used? (U)

Collocations	What words or types of words occur with this one? (U)	What words or types of words must be used with this one? (U)
Constraints on use (register, frequency...)	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word? (U)	Where, when, and how often can this word be used? (U)

F (Form) M (Meaning) U (Use)

*Source adapted from Nation (2020, p. 16)*

A good number of teaching-learning programs and resources reinforce the teaching of grammar as the core of instruction, but it is more probably that a second language speaker brings with them a dictionary instead of a grammar book (Schmitt, 2010). Teachers need to intentionally plan for the development of vocabulary in the ESL classrooms, this will result in closing the gap of the reading and speaking comprehension.

### **Types of Vocabulary**

Previously, we have discussed the difficulties a second language learner might face when their vocabulary knowledge is limited; also, we have seen how the teaching of vocabulary benefits and supports the four language skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Now, it is important to determine the kind of words that should be taught in order to help teachers determine which vocabulary words an ESL beginner should know. Nation (2013) highlighted three types of vocabulary: high-frequency words, technical vocabulary, and academic vocabulary. Technical vocabulary is what “learners need for learning discipline-specific language” (Qureshi, 2018, p. 1). Hence, technical vocabulary is the specific vocabulary a lawyer,

doctor, businessman, etc. needs to know to communicate in their field. However, as the subject of this project is elementary ESL beginners or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) newcomers high-frequency words and academic language are what this section will focus on.

When talking about newcomers or beginner ESL learners, it is important to break down the vocabulary into Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. Tier 1 words include cognates, background, or basic vocabulary (words students know in their first language), and common expressions (greetings, farewells, etc.). Tier 2 focuses on academic high-frequency words, connectors, and transition words that students find in books; and Tier 3 is content vocabulary (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013). The instruction priority regarding these three categories depends on the individual student's needs. Calderón and Slakk (2019) explained it as such:

We have found that the most effective vocabulary instruction for ELs focuses on Tier 2 words and phrases and to assist students in comprehending Tier 3 words and phrases that are typically defined in a text. However, newcomers, who may be in a formal educational setting for the first time, will need assistance with Tier 1 words as well. (p. 74)

To support Tier 2 words teachers should look at the most recent words lists. Word lists started to appear around the 1970s and 1990s (Qureshi, 2018) and Nation's (2006) research showed a list of the 2000 most frequent words. Dang (2018) pointed out that there are 4 recent wordlists of note:

- (1) the list of the most frequent 2,000 words of Nation's (2006) 14,000 British National Corpus (BNC) words (BNC2000), (2) the list of the most frequent 2,000 words of Nation's (2012) 25,000 BNC and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) words (BNC/COCA2000), (3) Brezina and Gablasova's (2015) new GSL, and (4) Dang and Webb's (2016) essential word list (EWL). (p. 2)

Otherwise, all academic vocabulary is included in Tier 3. Gehsmann (2018) remarked that written English academic vocabulary is often found in books and takes more time and more teacher strategies for students to learn since some words are specific to the content. In the case of a newcomer, this vocabulary might be in literacy: informational text, character, illustration, etc., or any math term as number bond, greater than, less than, etc. According to Short et al (2018), knowing your students is the number one principle for teaching English learners and highlighted that “Teachers learn basic information about their student’s families, languages, cultures, and educational background” (p. 8). Getting the time to know students’ strengths and needs will give teachers accurate information about students’ specific academic language needs. By selecting key vocabulary to teach, second language learners can begin to build comprehension (Calderón, 2012).

### **Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)**

Scholarly research has shown that vocabulary is a great predictor of reading comprehension (Wright & Cervetti, 2016). Also, vocabulary improves listening and speaking skills. Educational research has resulted in many teaching strategies having been developed to help teachers in their classroom practices. Hulstijn (2003) explained that in vocabulary learning there are 2 types of learning: incidental and intentional. Intentional learning is the act of trying hard to memorize definitions, spelling, sounds and grammar. On the other hand, incidental learning happens when the English learner learns words by “accident” in the middle of an activity, more related with reading, paying more attention to meaning than structure or spelling (p. 349).

Intentional learning implies vocabulary pre-teaching. Some language researchers such as Webb (2019) affirmed that vocabulary pre-teaching practices prevent students from learning to deal with unknown vocabulary in context through experiencing vocabulary in an overcontrolled learning atmosphere. Also, Ramos (2015) added that vocabulary pre-teaching interferes in the second language learner's interest and motivation to learn new vocabulary by placing more attention on lexical definitions rather than contextual meaning. Incidental learning focuses on the contextual meaning, or connotation of a word, more than the lexical, or dictionary definition. Yeung, et al. (2019) pointed out that incidental learning does not limit the number of words learners could learn. Hence, Molle et al (2021) proposed embedded teaching, as a combination of both incidental and intentional vocabulary learning to ease the difficulty of content area learning, highlighting students' engagement and involvement. Consequently, Al-Darayseh (2014) argued that "the combination of explicit [intentional] and implicit [incidental] vocabulary strategies has proved to be effective in increasing students' vocabulary size, and as a result, in improving their reading comprehension skills" (p.1114).

There are many strategies to enhance vocabulary. Peregoy and Boyle (2017) highlighted that a teacher searching for working with English learners might look at the first 500 or 1,000 high-frequency lists. Also, that the day-to-day class activities will provide these students the environment necessary to learn routine words (p. 270). Bush (2018) highlighted that Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) are divided into two categories: direct and indirect stating that "The direct strategies were further divided into memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. The subcategories of indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective, and social strategies" (p. 4).

Peregoy and Boyle (2017) suggested strategies such as Total Physical Response (TPR), actions to learn meaning (Asher, 2000); web tools for word searching; word cards to help

students to remember lexis; word wall dictionaries to enhance vocabulary development and visual reference; use of idioms to reinforce as they show up in readings; and read-alouds to promote English grammar structure and word sounding (pp. 270-273). On the other hand, Rogers (2018) emphasized metacognitive strategies to learn vocabulary and stated, “not only does metacognition aid in the acquisition of vocabulary directly, but also indirectly in that it allows students to develop other learning strategies in the direct category” (p. 3) and proposed some strategies that could add such frequent no-stakes testing which is more quizzing and less testing to lower the anxiety. Jesness (2014) highlighted the use of cognates to facilitate students first steps in English. Calderón & Slakk (2019) included Preteaching Vocabulary mainly for teaching Tier 2 vocabulary (p. 80).

In conclusion, vocabulary is a strong ally to help ESL learners to improve the four language skills. English beginners or newcome learners will need an extra support from the teacher to help them to close the vocabulary gap. To do so, the teacher can have some assistance from the high-frequency word and word family lists. Also, taking some time to meet the students will give the teacher a more accurate perspective on students’ background knowledge and activate their Tier 1 vocabulary. Finally, the teacher should apply contextualized and different VLSs to promote vocabulary development.



### **Chapter Three: Project Design**

In this chapter, I intend to explain the rationale behind the creation of lesson plans that will address vocabulary teaching in an effort to support teachers with their newcomer or beginner English language learners (ELL) in elementary school. Undoubtedly, vocabulary is a strong component of oral and written communication. Beck et al. (2013) stated that “vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to reading proficiency in particular and school achievement in general” (p. 1). Accordingly, these lesson plans will assist Tier 1 or basic words, Tier 2 or high-frequency words, and Tier 3 or low-frequency/specific words (Beck et al., 2013).

Calderón and Slakk (2019) affirmed that English Second Language (ESL) learners will benefit the most from Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction. Nevertheless, I found it important to add Tier 1 teaching ideas for beginner English learners who might need the first exposure to that basic vocabulary. According to Coxhead (2013), learning vocabulary requires exposure to new vocabulary and phrases, and typically 10 to 20 exposures are considered effective for vocabulary knowledge. For this reason, Tier 1 is not considered necessary to teach it directly since students will acquire it along with their interaction in the classroom. However, I will dedicate a space in my project with ideas on how to incorporate this basic vocabulary in the class day without the preparation of a vocabulary lesson plan. I consider Tier 1 as the first base vocabulary since it is the first interaction with the language necessary for the student to have a voice in the classroom; classroom objects, greetings, and farewells, body parts, feelings, number names, family members, asking for the bathroom or water is part of Tier 1 vocabulary.

As stated before, Tier 2 vocabulary includes high-frequency words. In my project, I will include lesson plans to teach these words as well as the criteria on how to select words from the text. Beck et al (2013) highlighted that Tier 2 vocabulary should not be words too difficult to explain to young learners, so a teacher might have that in mind when selecting words. Also, there are lists of high-frequency words according to students' grade level on the internet. Teachers without a core content material might want to do that search to include them in their lesson planning. Furthermore, there is not a magic formula to select appropriate grade-level vocabulary and no boundaries if a teacher decides to teach certain words considered for upper grades only; it will not be contemplated as wrong if the student is able to explain its meaning and/or the word is useful and interesting for the learner (Beck et al, 2013).

On the other hand, Tier 3 vocabulary is more related to content-based vocabulary. This specific vocabulary is taught to English speakers in subjects such as math, science, or social studies by content area teachers. Since these words might be found only in these subjects or fields, they are considered low-frequency words or academic language. ELLs might need extra support or scaffolding to learn academic language considering that it takes longer to be acquired because of its low social cues and context. This vocabulary might need to be included in pre-teaching to prepare the students for the lesson (Herrera and Murry, 2016). This type of vocabulary might need more direct teaching and more effort from the teacher to contextualize it during the lessons.

Teaching English vocabulary includes a large list of nearly 200,000 word. Covering them all in one project would be essentially impossible. However, as a teacher, I know how hard it is to know where to start. I have found that online resources are easier to use and disseminate information when internet access is available. This is the reason why I have chosen a website as

a means to build my project. The website I want to create will be an open online tool for teachers who want to have a starting reference point for vocabulary teaching. In each tab, teachers will find some information on how to find accurate words to teach based on educational researchers' ideas as well as general lesson plans teachers can adapt according to their students' needs. Also, teachers will find a variety of teaching strategies and online resources. Finally, since teachers have an enormous capacity to innovate in their lessons and classrooms, I will provide a space where teachers can share their teaching ideas with others, which is a great way to support colleagues word wide.

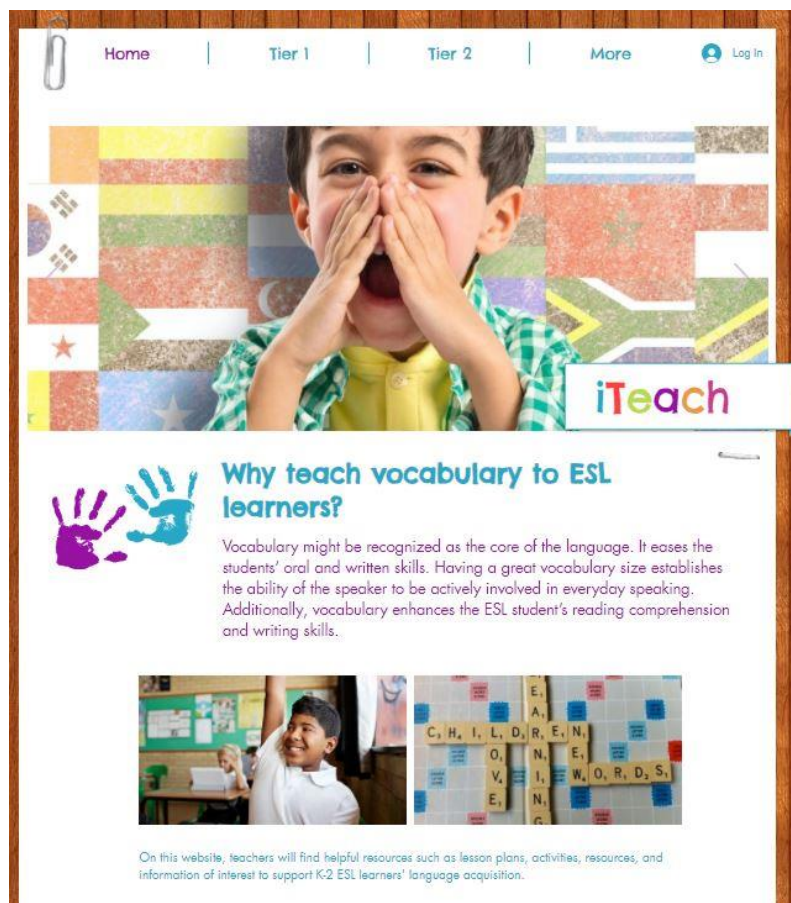
## **Chapter Four: The Project**

After the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, teachers and students around the world returned to the classrooms. This event divided education, before and after Covid-19 and teachers showed their strength, flexibility, and creativity as their superpower to answer this unpredictable situation. Nevertheless, coming back to the classrooms has opened a new situation: huge gaps in vocabulary, reading skills, and fine motor skills. Teachers need to look to new strategies to close these academic gaps. While the technology abilities were well developed, now working on high expectations is the priority.

This new perspective brought to my attention the significance of teaching vocabulary as a response to improving students' target language skills. Vocabulary is the bridge that joins language comprehension to the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Hence, by increasing students' vocabulary breadth (vocabulary size, determined by the number of words a person knows) and depth (how well a person knows a word both morphologically and contextually) students' four language skills will improve making them reach academic goals. On the other hand, young ESL learners demand more time and more effort to keep them engaged and motivated to learn. A young ESL beginner learner requires time and scaffolding to acquire the vocabulary necessary to have a voice in the class. Therefore, the vocabulary Tiers strategies help as means of scaffolding strategies to assist students' comprehension during class activities.

Using a website facilitates wide coverage and the possibility to help teachers from different countries with the same need. On my website, teachers will find lesson plans ideas


to apply in their teaching practices, as well as resources, educational material, vocabulary information, and a community of support for teaching practices. I have named my website iTeach and this is its address <https://cindygilpascuas.wixsite.com/iteach>



**Figure 4.1:** Home Page


On the home page (Figure 4.1), teachers will find some information about the benefits of teaching vocabulary and how this enhances the four language skills. The website navigation menu shows a tab dedicated to each Tier. Additional tabs include educational resources and contact information. Also, it displays the main purpose of the website which is to provide lesson plans ideas about vocabulary teaching. At the bottom of the home page (Figure 4.2), there is a short information section about the 3 Tiers and direct access to them.

## Vocabulary by Tiers




**Tier 1**

Tier 1 words include cognates, background, or basic vocabulary (words students know in their first language), and common expressions (greetings, farewells, etc.).



**Tier 2**

Tier 2 focuses on academic high-frequency words, connectors, and transition words that students find in books.

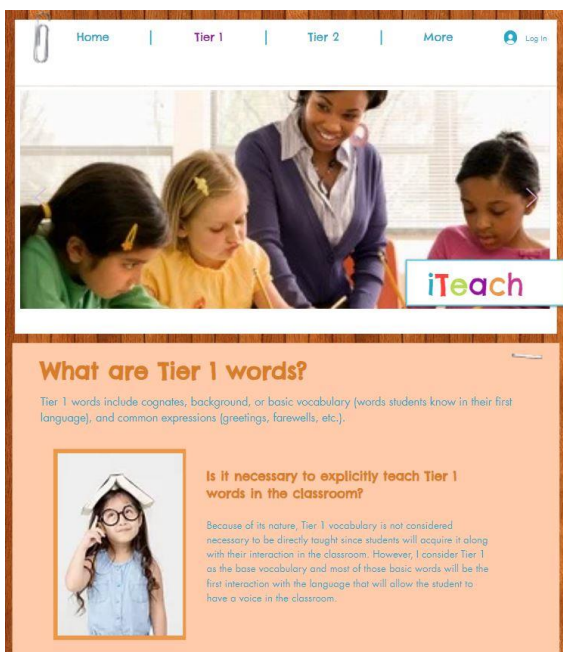


**Tier 3**

This specific vocabulary is taught to English speakers in subjects such as math, science, or social studies by content area teachers. Since these words might be found only in these subjects or fields, they are considered low-frequency words or academic language.

**Figure 4.2: Home Page**

Tier 1 tab (Figure 4.3) contains a brief explanation of what Tier 1 words are. Despite Tier 1 words being basic vocabulary, and research shows that students will acquire those through class interaction without explicit instruction, I still consider it important to provide a space during the morning routine in which teachers refer to this type of vocabulary. Tier 1 vocabulary might give young ESL beginner students a voice in the classroom.



Home | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | More | Log In

**What are Tier 1 words?**

Tier 1 words include cognates, background, or basic vocabulary (words students know in their first language), and common expressions (greetings, farewells, etc.).

**Is it necessary to explicitly teach Tier 1 words in the classroom?**

Because of its nature, Tier 1 vocabulary is not considered necessary to be directly taught since students will acquire it along with their interaction in the classroom. However, I consider Tier 1 as the base vocabulary and most of those basic words will be the first interaction with the language that will allow the student to have a voice in the classroom.

**Figure 4.3: Tier 1**

This tab has direct access to Tier 1 lesson plans (Figure 4.4) and a list of videos the teacher can use during this time. Also, I added additional research information.



**Figure 4.4: Tier 1**

Tier 1 lesson plans (Figure 4.5.) include teaching ideas to incorporate basic vocabulary teaching during the morning routine. Videos are a great strategy to teach vocabulary to young students. The animation, the bright colors, and the repetition of words, and phrases keep students engaged while practicing grammar structures. During these sessions, teachers use gestures and a series of questions to challenge students to use and recognize the vocabulary they are practicing in the videos. The lesson plans were planned for 3 weeks and have different activities the teacher can apply during this time.

Tier 1	
Vocabulary target	the school, greetings farewells, weather/seasons, days of the week/months of the year, numbers/shapes, holidays, body, food, house/family.
Time	10 to 15 mins
Materials	Teacher device, projector, speakers.
<p><b>Teacher's note</b> I recommend applying these activities during the morning routine or at the end of the day. Each teacher might choose the relevance of the topics. Nevertheless, I suggest starting these lessons with vocabulary related to the classroom environment as the school, greetings farewells, weather/seasons, days of the week/months of the year, numbers/shapes. Little by little the teacher may want to include holidays, body, food, house/family. Also, I would suggest a continuity of 3 weeks with the same routine or until the teacher observes a student mastering the vocabulary. If students are losing the interest on the video but not mastering it, the teacher should consider changing the material.</p> <p><b>Procedure:</b> <b>Day 1 and 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorporate in your routine a series of videos during the morning routine.</li> <li>2. Tell students you want them to watch the song about _____. While playing the video try to incorporate mimics and encourage students to follow you.</li> </ol> <p><b>Day 3 and 4</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Challenge the students to keep singing the song but lower the volume so you can hear if they are articulating the target vocabulary.</li> <li>4. Pause or stop the video to ask questions about it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is this?</li> <li>• What color is it?</li> <li>• Do you have/Have you seen one like this? What color is yours/was it?</li> <li>• Name it in order/Name</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Day 5</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Group challenge: Divide the class into two groups and challenge them to sing the song while watching the video without sound.</li> <li>6. Ask the same questions you use on day 3 and 4 by groups. Encourage students to use long sentences such as This is a ____; It's color is ____; I saw/I do have one like this.</li> </ol> <p><b>Week 2 and 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Play the video and allow students to sing it. The teacher can stay in front of the students helping with the mimics.</li> <li>8. Challenge your students by making more high order thinking questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If today is ____ what day is tomorrow? /If today is ____ what day was yesterday?</li> <li>• How is the weather like today? Do you think it might change? How do you know it?</li> <li>• Ask your friend: What is your favorite color? Then, who wants to tell me what your friend's favorite color is. (Same with the numbers or food).</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to get students vocabulary knowledge by giving clues of the word you are thinking of. The word I'm thinking of is a shape with no sides and looks like a ball.</li> </ul> <p><b>**Remember to use as many gestures as necessary while articulating each word or question; keep in mind that you are trying to help students to retrieve previous knowledge.</b></p>	
Greetings and Farewells	<a href="#">Have a Good morning, have a good day</a> <a href="#">Hello song</a> <a href="#">The greeting song</a>
The school	<a href="#">School vocabulary</a> <a href="#">Anna at school</a> <a href="#">Let's have a class</a>
Weather/Seasons	<a href="#">Seasons</a> <a href="#">Weather</a> <a href="#">If you know all the seasons</a> <a href="#">How's the weather</a>
Days of the weeks/months of the year	<a href="#">The seven days of the week song</a> <a href="#">Days of the week syllables song</a> <a href="#">Days of the week rap back</a> <a href="#">12 months of the year</a> <a href="#">Months of the year rap</a> <a href="#">Months of the year song</a> <a href="#">Counting from 1 to 10</a>
Numbers/Shapes	<a href="#">How many fingers?</a> <a href="#">Count to 20 and workout</a> <a href="#">Count by 1's to 20 NOW!</a> <a href="#">Count to 100 by 1's</a> <a href="#">Count to 100</a> <a href="#">Dance with shapes</a> <a href="#">Shapes are all around</a> <a href="#">Shapes</a> <a href="#">3D shapes</a>
Holidays	<a href="#">Halloween vocabulary</a> <a href="#">Christmas vocabulary</a> <a href="#">Baby shark's Thanksgiving Day</a> <a href="#">Easter vocabulary for kids</a> <a href="#">Valentine's Day</a>
Body	<a href="#">Body Parts Song for Kids</a> <a href="#">Hello, my body</a> <a href="#">Body Bop Rap Dance</a> <a href="#">I've Got the Rhythm</a> <a href="#">I've Got the Rhythm Dance</a>
Family/House	<a href="#">Family</a> <a href="#">Sesame Street: Family Song</a> <a href="#">My house</a> <a href="#">My house</a>

Figure 4.5: Tier 1 Lesson Plans

Additionally, teachers might download the link list only (Figure 4.6). This list includes a variety of videos of basic vocabulary such as greetings and farewells, the school, days of the week and months of the year, numbers and shapes, holidays, body, family and household, and food.



Tier 1 Links	
Greetings and Farewells	<a href="#">Have a Good morning, have a good day</a> <a href="#">Hello song</a> <a href="#">The greeting song</a>
The school	<a href="#">School vocabulary</a> <a href="#">Anna at school</a> <a href="#">Let's have a class</a>
Weather/Seasons	<a href="#">Seasons</a> <a href="#">Weather</a> <a href="#">If you know all the seasons</a> <a href="#">How's the weather</a>
Days of the weeks/months of the year	<a href="#">The seven days of the week song</a> <a href="#">Days of the week syllables song</a> <a href="#">Days of the week rap back</a> <a href="#">12 months of the year</a> <a href="#">Months of the year rap</a> <a href="#">Months of the year song</a>
Numbers/Shapes	<a href="#">Counting from 1 to 10</a> <a href="#">How many fingers?</a> <a href="#">Count to 20 and workout</a> <a href="#">Count by 1's to 20 NOW!</a> <a href="#">Count to 100 by 1's</a> <a href="#">Count to 100</a> <a href="#">Dance with shapes</a> <a href="#">Shapes are all around</a> <a href="#">Shapes</a> <a href="#">3D shapes</a>
Holidays	<a href="#">Halloween vocabulary</a> <a href="#">Christmas vocabulary</a> <a href="#">Baby shark's Thanksgiving Day</a> <a href="#">Easter vocabulary for kids</a> <a href="#">Valentine's Day</a>
Body	<a href="#">Body Parts Song for Kids</a> <a href="#">Hello, my body</a> <a href="#">Body Bop Bop Dance</a> <a href="#">I've Got the Rhythm</a> <a href="#">I've Got the Rhythm Dance</a>
Family/House	<a href="#">Family</a> <a href="#">Sesame Street: Family Song</a> <a href="#">My house</a> <a href="#">My house</a>
Food	<a href="#">Are you hungry?</a> <a href="#">I'm hungry</a> <a href="#">Do you like broccoli ice cream?</a>

**Figure 4.6: Tier 1 Links**

The next tab is Tier 2 (Figure 4.7). This tab contains an explanation of what words are considered Tier 2 and the criteria to select Tier 2 vocabulary. Since this vocabulary is taken from readings, high and low frequency words are part of these. Besides, Tier 2 lesson plans and editable resources (Figure 4.8) are part of this section.



**What are Tier 2 words?**

Tier 2 focuses on academic high-frequency words, connectors, and transition words that students find in books.



**What criteria should a teacher bear in mind when identifying and selecting Tier 2 words?**

There is not a "right" formula for Tier 2 words selection. Nevertheless, every teacher might keep in mind its frequency, usefulness to make connections and, facility to explain it by using student-friendly words.

Figure 4.7: Tier 2

**LESSON PLANS**

Tier 2 word selection...

*"Words might be selected for attention that may be familiar to students but which illustrate the power of an author's choice of words to reveal information about a character or situation."*

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2013). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. (2nd Ed.). The Guilford Press.



**Lesson Plans for Tier 2**

Tier 2 lesson plans are based on strategies such as Read-Alouds, Web tools, Pre-teaching, Metacognition principles. (Click on the picture to get access)



**Tier 2 Editables**

By clicking on the picture you will get access to the editable documents attached to the lesson plans. Make a copy or download them and edit those as need it.

**Tier 1** **Tier 3**



Figure 4.8: Tier 2

There are four lesson plans added for Tier 2. The first lesson plan (Figure 4.9) was developed with the pre-teaching strategy. After the vocabulary is selected, this is presented to the student before reading takes place. The main objective of this strategy is to provide students with a previous picture of the text. Making use of illustrations to help beginners to link the new vocabulary with the one they may know in their first language, is the beginning of the activity. Making certain noises when seeing one of the words, using synonyms, or kid-friendly word definitions activates vocabulary recognition. This lesson plan provides variations and extensions to better assist the different ESL beginners in a class.

Tier 2	
Vocabulary Strategy	Pre-teaching High frequency words from reading books.
Time	15-20 minutes
Materials	Laptop, pre-designed ppt with the vocabulary needed: picture and the word written in big size font, vocabulary notebook or vocabulary folder. <a href="#">Book sample</a> <a href="#">Vocabulary Presentation Sample</a>
Focus or review	Explain to the students the type of text they are about to read: genre, topic. But tell them you want them to look and listen to some words they will find in the text and that might help them to understand the best while reading.
Teacher input	The teacher should show the students the picture to activate their background knowledge. Then, the teacher will show the students the written word while making emphasis on all word sounds. Repeat with every word. Before starting reading, make a fast review. <u>Extension:</u> After day 2, the teacher can include synonyms or word meanings (using student-level words) to refer to the vocabulary.
Guided Practice	While reading the text, tell students they will touch their nose, make a sound, clap, snap, or any other cue when they found one of the vocabulary words in the text. If the students use the cue, stop the reading, and repeat the sentence where the word is and highlight how the author uses that word in that sentence.
Independent Practice	Vocabulary notebook/folder Beginner ESL students will need some support while acquiring some independence. During the first lessons, to apply this strategy you may ask them to write the vocabulary, draw a picture or sentence to represent it. <u>Variation:</u> Little by little and as the ESL learners increase the size of vocabulary you can ask them to just enter in their vocabulary notebook/folder the words from their vocabulary they just learned that were new for them or they found a new way to use it. The teacher can encourage them to include any other word they found in the reading.
Assessment	By showing students the pictures only, ask students to name the words. The teacher can help them to retrieve information by making the first sounds. <u>Variation:</u> As students gained more confidence with vocabulary recognition, make them use the word in a sentence or provide the sentence for the

students to verbally complete it with the most accurate word. The teacher might want to use the same sentences at the beginning and then, vary those as students learn how to use the words.

**Figure 4.9:** Tier 2, Pre-teaching strategy.

The second lesson plan (Figure 4.10) is based on using games. Games are a powerful tool for vocabulary teaching and student motivation. This short activity will help students to work on word spelling and phonemic awareness. Additionally, this lesson reinforces modeling which is key when working with the beginning level.

Tier 2	
Vocabulary strategy	Word Cards, Read-Alouds, Sequence Activities
Time	20 - 30 minutes (ideal for small group instruction)
Materials	Read-Alouds, pencils, crayons, construction paper.
Focus or review	Word-meaning introduction
Teacher input	The teacher reads aloud the class book. Read-Alouds is a great resource for meaning in context. The teacher might stop for a short word definition during the reading.
Guided Practice	After the reading, the teacher returns to those sophisticated or selected words into the story to highlight their context. <i>"In the story (provide the segment or mention the event in the story using the chosen word)".</i> The teacher asks the students to repeat the word <i>"say with me"</i> . Explain the word using student-friendly words <i>"__ means when you..."</i> . Try to use as many gestures as you can. Provide more examples different from the one in the story. If necessary, use drawings or most common situations. Let students participate providing more situations.
Independent Practice	Give students rectangles of construction paper. Students will write the vocabulary word on one side and a drawing, a known word in English or their home language.  <u>Extension:</u> With the word cards already done, students may get into different activities such as word sorts, grouping words by meaning, grammatical category, or alphabetically.
Assessment	Students place their word cards upside down and with the clues they drew on the visible part, they will try to guess it. The teacher will observe students' right guesses or struggles.

**Figure 4.10:** Tier 2, clapping game strategy

The Tier 2 third lesson plan (Figure 4.11) is a combination of three different strategies: Word Cards, Read-Aloud, and Sequence Activities. Read-Aloud provides a rich source of vocabulary in context. The main purpose of this lesson is to let students make connections through the reading. Teachers read the text and at the end return to the vocabulary words and throughout a sequence activity, help the student to re-build vocabulary meaning. As part of the independent practice activity, students make vocabulary word cards using word-drawing meaning. This lesson plan suggests an extension activity the teacher might use in future reading sessions.

Tier 2	
Vocabulary strategy	Word Cards, Read-Alouds, Sequence Activities
Time	20 - 30 minutes (ideal for small group instruction)
Materials	Read-Alouds, pencils, crayons, construction paper.
Focus or review	Word-meaning introduction
Teacher input	The teacher reads aloud the class book. Read-Alouds is a great resource for meaning in context. The teacher might stop for a short word definition during the reading.
Guided Practice	After the reading, the teacher returns to those sophisticated or selected words into the story to highlight their context. <i>"In the story (provide the segment or mention the event in the story using the chosen word)".</i> The teacher asks the students to repeat the word <i>"say with me"</i> . Explain the word using student-friendly words <i>" means when you..."</i> . Try to use as many gestures as you can. Provide more examples different from the one in the story. If necessary, use drawings or most common situations. Let students participate providing more situations.
Independent Practice	Give students rectangles of construction paper. Students will write the vocabulary word on one side and a drawing, a known word in English or their home language.  <u>Extension:</u> With the word cards already done, students may get into different activities such as word sorts, grouping words by meaning, grammatical category, or alphabetically.
Assessment	Students place their word cards upside down and with the clues they drew on the visible part, they will try to guess it. The teacher will observe students' right guesses or struggles.

**Figure 4.11:** Tier 2, read-aloud, words cards, and sequence activities strategies

The last lesson plan (Figure 4.12) for this vocabulary Tier uses the Web Tools strategy. This lesson plan promotes metacognitive practices as well. Using google translator and teacher-student meetings, the teacher helps students to set vocabulary goals while working on self-reflection and making them take responsibility for their learning. A frequency chart to help the student to be aware of vocabulary in use and a self-monitoring assessment, attached to the lesson, might help the teacher to track this activity.



Tier 2	
Vocabulary strategy	Web tools (Independent small group)
Time	15 mins
Materials	Laptops or iPads, internet connection, vocabulary journals.
Focus or review	Looking up unknown words using online tools will reinforce students' responsibility for their learning.
Teacher input	The teacher explains to students that every time they find an unknown word, they can look it up on google translator. Young learners require step-by-step instruction on how to unlock the PC or laptop. Also, the teacher might leave the website open for them during the first trials using this strategy. By creating teacher-student short meetings, the teacher will encourage and follow up vocabulary learning.
Guided Practice	<p>The teacher will set short meetings with students to settle vocabulary goals to increase vocabulary acquisition. Give students reachable goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>This week, I want you to use google translator to look up at least 2 or 3 words you find hard to understand in the readings or from your worksheets.</i></li> </ul> <p>Meeting's frequency and goals will depend on the student's needs. The teacher will model with the student how to look up a word using google translator. Make emphasis on typing, voice recording, pronunciation tool, and audio option.</p> <p><u>Extension:</u> During the follow-up meetings, the teacher might set a new goal with a greater number of words. Otherwise, the teacher may propose to students to monitor their new words by making a mark on a <a href="#">frequency chart</a> every time the student says, writes, or visualizes the word in use.</p>
Independent Practice	<p>Students will use a vocabulary journal to enter the word they looked up and a picture, known word in English or their first language to link it. Drawings are more adequate for young elementary students.</p> <p><u>Variation:</u> Enter a mark in their <a href="#">frequency chart</a>.</p>
Assessment	With the teacher's prompt, students complete a <a href="#">self-monitoring assessment</a> to reflect on their progress. The teacher uses this time to help students to redirect their strategies and help them to work on more successful ones. Also, the teacher shares new expectations and goals.

**Figure 4.12:** Tier 2, web tools strategy

The Tier 3 tab (Figure 4.13) shows information about what words make part of this tier and three lesson plans (Figure 4.14) based on strategies such as word wall, graphic organizers, and hands-on activities. Tier 3 vocabulary is known as academic vocabulary. This vocabulary is part of the content area such as math, science, and social studies. Every resource attached to the lesson plans is also available for teachers to download (Figure 4.14) and edit as needed.



Home | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | More Log In

## What are Tier 3 words?

Tier 3 vocabulary is more related to content-based vocabulary. This specific vocabulary is taught to English speakers in subjects such as math, science, or social studies by content area teachers. Since these words might be found only in these subjects or fields, they are considered low-frequency words or academic language.

Figure 4.13: Tier 3

## LESSON PLANS

### About Tier 3

*"Tier 2 words are high-frequency words that have multiple cross-disciplinary meanings. These are the words that help us to define and comprehend the subject-specific Tier 3 vocabulary. Tier 3 words are those that are highly specific to content and are rarely used in more than one subject area."*

Calderón, M. E., & Stark, S. (2019). Success with multilingual newcomers and English learners: Proven practices for school leadership teams. ASCD.

### Lesson Plans for Tier 3

Tier 3 lesson plans are based on graphic organizers, Word Wall, and hands-on activities.

### Tier 3 Resources



By clicking on the picture you will get access to the worksheets resources attached to the lesson plans.

Tier 1 Tier 2



Figure 4.14: Tier 3

The word wall strategy used on the first lesson plan for Tier 3 (Figure 4.15) suggests that teachers use this to leave a visual reminder of the subject vocabulary. By giving students the vocabulary lists, they can help to add more and new words to the word wall. Also, these activities can be linked to the Tier 2 web tool strategies lesson plan (Figure 4.12) as a student vocabulary assignment. Thus, the teacher might use these words for writing or speaking activities in the class which is included in the independent work section.

Tier 3	
Vocabulary Strategy	Word Wall
Materials	Printed word cards or index cards, classroom billboard.
Focus and Teacher input	Ideal for target content vocabulary in subjects such as math, science, and social studies. Teachers will need a classroom billboard to use for this specific vocabulary or one per subject. The teacher shows students where the word wall is in the room. Also, the teacher will say to students that any time they need to remember a word or how to spell it, they can look for it on the word wall.
How to apply it:	There are many different ideas about Word Wall. Each teacher will apply the one they find more appropriate for their class.
Alphabetically:	 <p>This is one of the most used by teachers and eases students' navigation through it to find the specific word they are looking for. Since teachers are working on building vocabulary to young learners, having the word written and an image to represent it, will help students to link the word with a mental picture (Semiotics) and then, have it ready for future connections.</p>
Synonyms:	 <p>Also, teachers would like to use word wall to use synonym lists. By writing a main known word, with picture, students can add synonyms to the class work list.</p>
Variation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher might want to use this strategy with family words.</li> <li>In case of virtuality, the teacher can create a Padlet with a virtual word wall. Look at my <a href="#">Padlet</a> to have a better picture.</li> </ul>
Whole group	Students can help with the Word Wall. Teachers divide the class into groups and give each group a list of the content vocabulary


	they are reviewing (life cycle, motion, solar system, known historical figures, or events). Ask students to create vocabulary cards for the word wall.
	<p><u>Variation:</u> The last activity can be connected to students' vocabulary goals (check <a href="#">Tier 2 lesson plans</a>: metacognitive lesson). Students can incorporate, as requested by the teacher, new words to the word wall, word family, or synonyms lists.</p>
Independent Practice	<p>The teacher can make of this Word Wall a very useful tool in the class. Here are some ideas of how to use this word wall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign students to make sentences using words from their Word Wall</li> <li>Ask them to choose a certain number of words and color them by syllables or sounds.</li> <li>For kindergarten: ask students to use play dough, connecting cubes, pipe cleaners, pony beads, to model the newly added words. Also, you can assign spelling menus activities as part of your class activities: Here are 2 activities taken from <a href="#">Mrs. Male's masterpieces</a> and</li> <li>Tech center: students can add new words to the Padlet word wall.</li> </ul>


**Figure 4.15:** Tier 3, word wall strategy

The next lesson plan for Tier 3 is the hands-on activities strategy (Figure 4.16). Most children, and especially elementary students, love using their hands to create. This lesson proposes the use of crafts and manipulatives as a means of subject vocabulary reinforcement. There are many great ideas for hands-on activities on the internet. The teacher will find some



websites they can visit and adapt those to their school and class disposition. Also, there are ideas on how and what activities to use those in the three different content area subjects: math (manipulatives in small centers), science (guided or graphic step by step experiments), and social studies (crafts).

Tier 3	
Vocabulary Strategy	Hands-on Activities
Materials	Manipulatives, arts and craft materials, copies
Focus and Teacher input	Hands-on activities benefits students in my different ways: increase retention, engage student with learning, practice problem solving and critical thinking.
Math	Hands-on activities for math are related with manipulatives that involves word and math skill. There are many different ideas to apply in your classroom on the internet. Here are some websites you can visit for some ideas: <a href="#">A kinder life</a> <a href="#">Fun learning for kids</a> <a href="#">K12 Learning Liftoff</a> <a href="#">Creekside learning K-1</a> <a href="#">Creekside learning 2</a>
Science	In science, hands-on activities are more related with little and fun experiments the teacher can link to the core topic. <a href="#">Around the lampfire</a> <a href="#">Lessons for little ones</a> <a href="#">Make science fun</a>
Social Studies	Hands-on activities for Social Studies are crafts. Here are some ideas: <a href="#">Map skills</a> <a href="#">Martin Luther King Jr.</a> <a href="#">Black history month</a> <a href="#">Heritage month</a>
Class Activities	<p><b>Math</b></p>  <p>Hands-on activities for math are useful for small group instruction. During small groups, assign hands-on activities to the independent group. Beginner ESL students will benefit from a demonstration of what is expected from them to do. Also, I recommend the teacher take a picture of the task expectations and place it on the wall next to this center. Visual cues will be helpful for students</p>

to remember or solve questions they might have but did not feel comfortable asking.
<p><b>Science</b></p>  <p>This strategy works better in whole group instruction since kids can share the same joy and excitement of their results and work cooperatively. When working with kindergartners, I recommend the teacher to set the classroom differently by making a semicircle, then the teacher will have a better view of students' work. The teacher can stay in the middle when going step by step while students follow instructions. Give students enough time to finish their process and monitor their work by walking around the room.</p> <p>First and second graders can follow instructions from a paper but make sure to tell them what is expected (you can show them a video or a picture of what they will get at the end). Additionally, attach a picture for each step and a few words to describe it.</p> <p>In both ways, oral or paper instructions, the teacher should include the target vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Social Studies:</b></p> <p>Since hands-on activities for Social Studies are more related to crafts, they can be done during small or whole group instruction. As well as with the other subjects, it is important to share with your students the final product.</p> <p>If the final product does not reflect any use of the target vocabulary, the teacher can ask kindergartners to write with crayons words that resonate the most to them about the subject topic. For first or second graders, the teacher might give students a starting sentence to complete it using words from their vocabulary about the topic.</p>

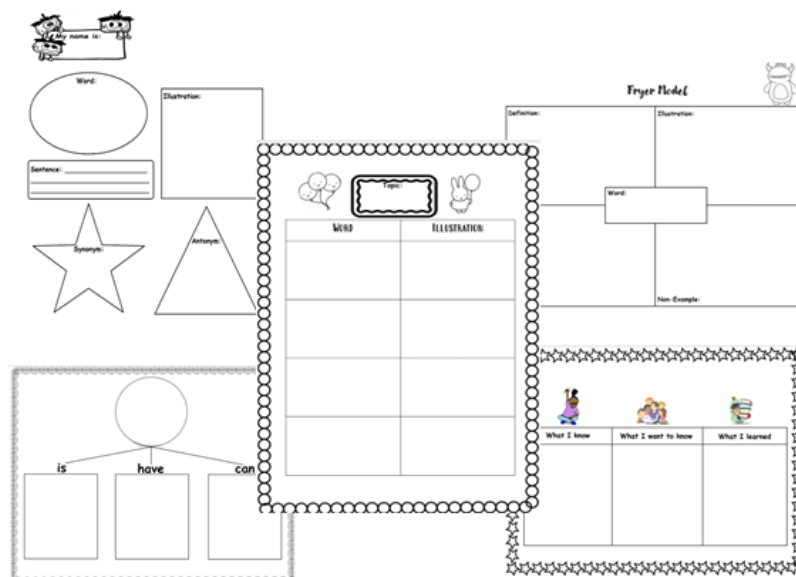
**Figure 4.16:** Tier 3, hands-on activities

The last Tier 3 lesson plan (Figure 4.17) uses graphic organizers (Figure 4.18) as a strategy to categorize and learn vocabulary meaning and context. When students can study a word morphological (form) and semantically (meaning in context) it gives them more tools to be more proficient in the target language.

Tier 3	
Vocabulary Strategy	Graphic Organizers
Materials	Copies
Focus and Teacher input	Making word relationships with content area.
<p><b>Graphic organizers:</b> This is a great strategy to help students to organize vocabulary and ease their retrieving. There are many vocabularies graphic organizers ideas on the web, and this is the ones chosen to apply K-2 ESL students.</p> <p><a href="#">Antonym/Synonym</a> <a href="#">Fryer Model</a> <a href="#">Word Illustration</a> <a href="#">Is, have, can</a> <a href="#">KWL Chart</a></p>	
Class Activities	<p>The teacher can choose the best moment of the class to apply these graphic organizers.</p> <p><b>Fryer Model</b> The teacher can use this graphic organizer to help students to learn any word they found hard to remember. To better support your students, the teacher might apply this activity in small groups. Students write the word in the middle and add a definition (the teacher can support students to write this using kid-friendly words), a drawing, an example sentence, and an opposite word(s). The teacher might allow students to use word/drawing sentences.</p> <p><b>Antonym/Synonym</b> The teacher divides the class into teams and gives each group or pair a word. Students complete the graphic organizer by making drawings or words. Allow students to share with other groups their papers. The teacher displays their work in a visible part of the class while the topic is ongoing for future reference.</p> <p><b>Word Illustration</b> The teacher may use this activity along with the vocabulary presentation (after the topic presentation or read-aloud). The teacher asks students to make a list of the topic vocabulary and represent each word with a picture.</p> <p><b>Is, have, can</b> Use this graphic organizer with animals or people. To summarize a topic, the teacher asks students to complete either with words or pictures a person/animal is, have, can. The teacher can make use of</p>

	<p>the word illustration list or word wall to help students to remember word spelling.</p> <p><b>KWL Chart</b> The teacher can help students to retrieve information and make new learning connections with KWL charts. By using mimics, visual aids, or short explanations the teacher will let students know what the class topic is about. Students complete the first two columns: What I Know and What I want to know. The teacher takes the time to listen to students' answers and make notes on a flipchart or whiteboard. At the end of the lesson, the teacher goes back to what was written by students and, in whole groups, encourages students to make connections. Then, students complete the last column: What I learned. Give students at least 3 to 5 minutes to share their learning outcomes with a friend. Allow students to use a combination of writing and drawings.</p>
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**Figure 4.17:** Tier 3, graphic organizers strategy

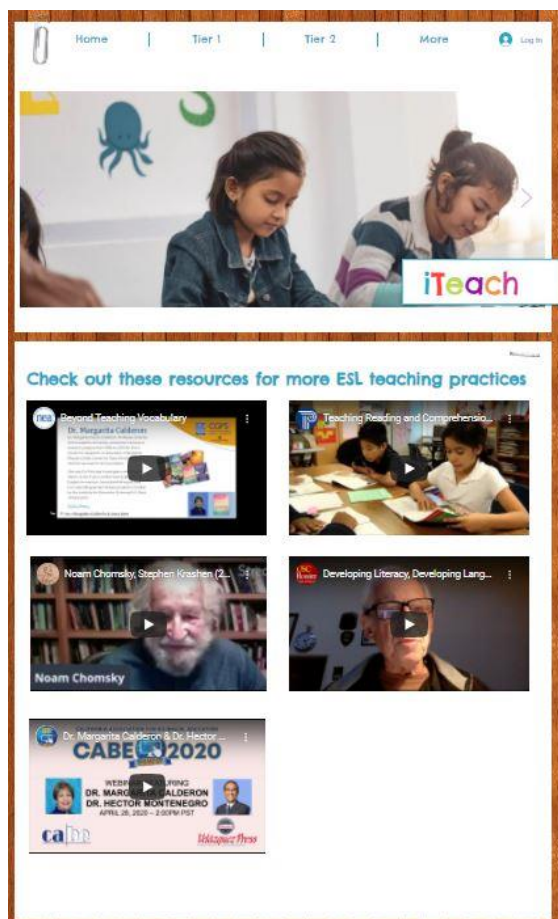


**Figure 4.18:** Tier 3, graphic organizers.

This website also includes a short section of educational information (figure 4.19).

Teachers need to continue their education in with newest resources, and the main purpose of this

section is to keep the teacher updated with interesting and useful information about language acquisition.



**Figure 4.19:** Educational tab

The last tab is meeting the author (Figure 4.20). It provides information about the person behind those lesson plans, and it encourages teachers to share their products and teaching outcomes with the teachers' community. Moreover, there is an upcoming events section to announce any conference, workshop, or webinar teachers might be interesting in being part of.



**Figure 4.20:** Meet the author

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

Teaching and learning a second language are complex but beautiful processes. There is plenty of responsibility from the teacher to help students to reach their academic goals. My experience as a language teacher, English as a Second Language Learner ESL, and an ESL student's mom has shown me the significance for a beginner or newcomer to find their voice in the classroom. Along with my research, I observed that vocabulary is a great start to support these specific populations of ESL students to enhance language skills. Vocabulary is present in everyday English inside and outside the classroom, but it is more likely that a beginner ESL student feels lost and unable to retrieve their background knowledge without a suitable guidance during their class lessons. TESOL and homeroom teachers should keep in mind that most of our ESL population did not decide to become a second language speaker since they were taken to the United States because of their parents' decisions.

This project has taught me different personal and educational aspects. Firstly, I truly connected theory with practice. Throughout the courses of this master in TESOL, teachers were exposed to different assignments proposed by the instructors with the goal of helping us to link what was in the books with what we were doing in our classes. This project is my own proposal of helping others to make their own connections while having in my mind the teachers' role as teaching ambassadors. Since education evolves with people, I wanted to persuade teachers with a message of strengthening the teaching community by inviting others to share what they are doing in their classes and what they have found successful in order to provide stronger tools to respond to educational changes.

Secondly, research is a powerful weapon. I had not realized about how deep the educational field is and how much you learn from researching. By gathering information for my thesis, I realized that there is much work to be done in the field of language acquisition. Education should be ready for unexpected and unpredictable changes such as the changes caused by COVID-19. Teachers worldwide had to integrate their teaching knowledge with a virtual classroom. Changes as the ones caused by COVID-19 open a new window on educational research and create an eagerness from teachers to find new ways to innovate their practices. Already known language acquisition struggles might continue, but as teachers, we should try our best to keep updated, to refresh our instruction strategies, and to be open to try new things.

Indeed, I am planning on sharing my website with the teacher communities on Facebook which I am member of and to keep updating it over time. Hopefully, this platform will encourage teachers to post their teaching experiences and practices to help ease the learning experience of many students in and out the United States. For the next step, I will develop space for different teaching and learning aspects such as reading, speaking, writing, and differentiated lessons. I would love to seek professional development opportunities to support teachers to keep them updated with language acquisition research by making the right connections on the educational field.

Finally, I would love to incorporate my school community as part of my project. Every year, my colleagues' classes are greatly impacted by the addition of newcomer ESL students to their classes and, most of the times, they do not know how to handle with the language learning process. I am aware of their constant struggle and how it is hard for them to make a connection with the students because of the language barrier. I find it helpful to share my outcomes to

support their classes while giving them more confidence on teaching English to a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse CDL student.

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